Student Manager 8.0 Standard vs. SQL Server Databases

With Student Manager (SM) 8.0 offers, ACEware offers our customers the option of using either the Standard VFP Database (based on the .dbf file format) or a MS SQL Server Database. While each SM customer may choose to migrate to the MS SQL Server format, in our opinion, the two groups who would benefit the most from migrating to SQL Server are: a) Customers with large datasets (names files of over 100,000 records) and/or b) Customers whose organizations have an IT infrastructure which already supports MS SQL Server installations and where the campus/organization IT group would prefer that all institutional databases are running on MS SQL Server.

Staff users of SM 8.0 who move to SQL should find the interface identical to what they were used to under the Standard version. Here are some things to think about when considering a move to SQL Server:

Advantages:
- *Security:* Core data is no longer stored in VFP's open tables. MS SQL Server adds a layer of authentication.
- *Convenient Maintenance*: With MS SQL Server your Database Administrator (DBA) can perform maintenance while users are in the Student Manager application.
- *Integrated Backup*: MS SQL server offers integrated backup options.
- *Use of an Existing Server*: Since your institution already uses MS SQL Server databases in other areas, you'll be able to "piggy back" on the existing MS SQL Server platforms.
- *Price Packaging*: The MS SQL Version of ACEweb (ACEweb 4.0) is included in the up-charge cost (see below)
- *Storage Size*: 2 GB limit of tables/support files is no longer an issue (though the size limit will not affect many customers.)

Considerations:
- *Hardware:* Your organization will need to acquire, install, configure, and manage a MS SQL Server database server.
- *Support:* The DBA from your organization is responsible for your MS SQL Server maintenance, upgrades, security, and support.
- *Custom Programming*: If you have custom programming (either within SM or custom pages in ACEweb), check with your ACEware Technical Consultant to verify that they will work the same in SM 8.0/ACEweb 4.0. Additional programming fees will apply to modify custom templates for them to work in MS SQL Server mode.
- Differences in SM 8.0 Operation
  - ➢ Deletion is now permanent. Marking a record for deletion will remove the record from the database when you save. You can set the minimum level for deletion for your system and then set people with a lower level than that in the areas you don't want them to delete things.
  - ➢ Last update date of tables in Help -> About Student Manager will not show a date if you have rebooted since the last time the table was updated

Technical Information:

- ***SQL Server System Specifications***: SM 8.0 runs on MS SQL Server 2014 or higher. The latest MS SQL Server is recommended. MS SQL Server Express (the free version) has size and hardware restrictions that hinder performance. ACEware will not be able to use MS SQL Server Express in your migration.
- ***DSN: DSN*** must be set up on all machines and be under the same name (the name will be asked for during porting but can be changed later by editing sqlconnect.ini).
- ***Data Conversion***: Your ACEware technician will provide a conversion routine to move current VFP data to MS SQL Server.

General:

- You can upgrade your current system to SM 8.0 and later choose to move to SQL Server. In fact, our recommendation is that even if you know you want to move to MS SQL Server, you upgrade your Standard VFP system to 8.0 now to become familiar with some of the new features and then later plan and implement the move to MS SQL Server.
- Again, general operations of SM 8.0 (and ACEweb 4.0) should be virtually the same whether you are running Standard (what you have now) or MS SQL Server databases. All reports from your current SM 7.2 (except for custom programming: see notes above) will move to 8.0 and run the same.

Pricing:

SQL Server Up charge: There is a database up charge of $3,750 to migrate to MS SQL Server. Your annual SMA will increase by $600 per year.

As always, if you have questions about SM 8.0 in general or specific issues related to the MS SQL Server option, contact your ACEware Technician.